



**WAKE COUNTY**  
**PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**Cathy Q. Moore**  
**Superintendent**  
Crossroads I  
5625 Dillard Drive  
Cary, NC 27518

tel: (919) 533-7769

June 27, 2019

Mark Johnson, State Superintendent  
Office of the State Superintendent  
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Mr. Johnson,

We are writing today in support of the North Carolina School Superintendents' Association request that you ask the General Assembly to delay implementation of the new Istation reading diagnostic tool. We further request that you ask the State Board of Education to use its statutory authority to approve mCLASS as a local alternative assessment in 2019-2020.

While we wholeheartedly agree with the association's position on this issue and the near unanimous sentiment of school district representatives who gathered earlier this week, we also encourage you to consider several other specifics.

- Forty year-round calendar elementary schools in Wake County will open in one week. Even if training were available, it is both impractical and disrespectful to assume teachers can prepare classrooms and master a new learning tool in less than five days. Statewide, there are more than 75 year-round calendar schools. Teachers on traditional 10-month contracts will master the new Istation tool only if they work for free.
- Best practice suggests that assessments for young children should be administered in a one-on-one setting by the child's teacher and in short segments over a period of several days or weeks. An assessment that relies solely on technology, such as Istation, does not provide teachers with information that supports students' early literacy skills and will negatively impact the most academically fragile.
- In order to meet the state's MTSS requirements, Wake and other districts have built a balanced assessment platform that includes mCLASS data. This is critically important for the success of the state's new ECATS system, which tracks student progress in academic intervention and is now required for special education students. If Wake and other districts abandon those efforts, students will not receive timely screening or intervention.
- As the state approved tool for the past several years, mCLASS is interwoven with other services and cannot be immediately replaced. Moreover, our district's previous use of Istation did not reveal any measurable advantage.

While we believe the short turnaround time alone would make a one-year delay logical, we offer the details above as specific illustrations of what would likely occur if the state were to abandon its current mCLASS reading tool on such short notice. We would be pleased to answer any questions you might have as you consider this request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Q. Moore".

Cathy Moore

Cc: Eric Davis, Chair, State Board of Education